

News Release

Senator Pete V. Domenici

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DOMENICI VOTES TO SEND PRESIDENT CROP INSURANCE BILL TO HELP NEW MEXICO FARMERS

Chile & Other Specialty Crops Offered Added Coverage in Bill

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senator Pete Domenici today said New Mexico chile farmers, and other crop producers, will be afforded greater coverage through crop insurance reform passed by the Senate and sent to the White House on Thursday.

Domenici, as Senate Budget Committee chairman, provided room in the FY2000 Budget Resolution allowing Congress to today complete the **Risk Management for the 21st Century Act (H.R.2559)**, a crop insurance reform measure. The bill commits an \$8.2 billion reserve fund provided in the FY2001 budget to improve and strengthen the federal crop insurance program.

Domenici also worked to ensure that improvements were made in the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). He also pressed for making the Federal Crop Insurance Program more flexible so that crop insurance would be available for crops that are not currently covered, such as chile.

"I want to say a hearty thanks to the United States Senate for passing the Budget Resolution that contemplated this issue and this problem and this solution," Domenici said.

The bill also provides \$7.1 billion in assistance to producers, also allowed under the FY 2001 budget.

"Normally in years passed, we've waited until the end of the year and gotten into an enormous argument as to how much agriculture emergency relief is enough. But this year we decided in the Budget Resolution to take care of this issue up front," Domenici said.

"The bulk of this assistance will go directly to producers and provide some relief to those now suffering depressed farm incomes," he said. "I hope that another bill the Senate may consider after the recess, the PNTR China bill, will provide expanded markets for our agriculture sector and thereby lessen the need for future agriculture subsidies.

Most farmers and ranchers I know want to and will produce for the market given a chance. They do not want and should not want to farm government subsidies.”

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